

Testimony Submitted by Jade Thomas to the Housing Committee
SB 291: An Act Concerning Certain Protections for Group and Family Child Care Homes
Connecticut General Assembly
March 10, 2022

Senator Lopes, Representative Williams, ranking members, and distinguished members of the Housing Committee:

My name is Jade Thomas and I work as the Connecticut Early Care and Education Fellow at All Our Kin. I am writing in support of SB 291 “An Act Concerning Certain Protections for Group and Family Child Care Homes”. All Our Kin has worked in Connecticut for two decades to ensure that children have the foundation they need to succeed in school and life. In fact, we’ve supported half of the state’s family child care programs in becoming licensed. We recognize that in order to achieve an equitable and just society for all we must care for not only our youngest children, but the parents, caregivers, and communities that nurture them.

Home-based child care, also known as family child care, is a high quality option that meets the unique needs of the families in our state. In Connecticut, there is an acute lack of quality, affordable child care, especially for families that face the greatest barriers to accessing care, including families with infants and toddlers, families that need flexible hours, and families that lack access to reliable transportation.

The coronavirus pandemic has underscored the importance of a robust early care and education system. Parents depend on reliable child care but so do employers. A UConn study found that Between 2006 and 2009, family child care providers licensed through All Our Kin created about \$18.4 million in additional tax revenue and generated \$15.2 million in macroeconomic benefits to the New Haven region alone. Much of this economic benefit was attributed to increased parental employment.

When we ensure that all families have access to high quality care, not only the economy thrives, but so do our children. Children experience the fastest rate of brain development from birth to the age of three. By ensuring children can learn in a safe and loving environment we set them up for kindergarten and far beyond. Despite the benefits of home-based child care businesses, educators continue to face significant challenges.

All Our Kin has heard countless stories from educators that have struggled to open, maintain, and sustain their businesses as a result of prohibitive leasing and zoning practices. One example is unreasonable high security deposits. I worked with an educator that was asked to provide 5 months rent as a security deposit. Without a clear cap many educators are forced to pay these amounts. Despite barriers like these, they continue to push forward. They understand that this

work is critical. They describe caring for children as a way to make a difference in their communities and the future. As a state we often say with a strong conviction that we value our children and our educators. Today I am urging you to support SB 291 in order to affirm this belief.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jade Thomas

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